

This Week in Congress

August 14, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Congress is out of session this month for the summer district work period. I am spending time traveling throughout the state to meet with Kansans and discuss current issues, as well as to attend local events. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Plot to Bomb U.S.-Bound Jets is Foiled, the War on Terror Continues

A plot to simultaneously blow up as many as 10 U.S.-bound passenger jets with liquid explosives hidden in carry-on luggage was foiled on Thursday. The British government has arrested numerous suspects. According to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, the plot "was sophisticated, it had a lot of members and it was international in scope." He said the suspects planned to smuggle bombs and detonators disguised as beverages,

electronic devices and other everyday objects onto planes.

This is another reminder that the world is not a very safe place. There are still people out there who are interested in causing death to Americans. This is not a time to panic, but rather it is a time to make sure we are taking all the necessary steps to protect the American people. I commend British and U.S. officials for thwarting the terrorists' planned attack.

Discussing Agriculture Disaster Assistance with NFU President

I had a phone conversation with Tom Buis, President of National Farmers Union (NFU), last week to discuss agriculture disaster assistance. Tom and I discussed the severity of the drought in Kansas and throughout the western plains. Tom also informed me that the need for aid goes beyond the drought stricken plains states and extends to the New England states devastated by floods earlier this summer. I will continue to work with agriculture groups to inform Members of Congress of the need for disaster assistance. I will work to devise disaster assistance that is targeted to those who had actual losses and need help as a result of natural disasters like drought and flooding.

Welcoming Buhler Teachers, Staff and Administration Back to School, Visiting Hutchinson

I met with Buhler teachers, staff and administration on Thursday during their annual orientation. I shared my appreciation for the work they do in guiding Kansas children through the school system. I specifically thanked the leaders in the school district, including Dr. David Brax, Superintendent of USD 313; Nancy Bether, Principal of Buhler Grade School; Mike Bryan, Principal of Obee Grade School; Donna Davis, Principal of Prosperity Grade School; Randy Roberts, Principal of Union Valley Grade School; Craig Williams, Principal of Prairie Hills Middle School; and Mike Berblinger, Principal of Buhler High School. I also thanked the members of the school board, who include President David Dick, Vice President Cliff Wray, Jeannie Warren, Chad Issinghoff, Mike Lang, David Holmes and Gaylen Banz.

After speaking to the Buhler group, I spent time in Hutchinson visiting local restaurants, businesses, the hospital and courthouse. I also enjoyed a visit with John Oswald of J.P. Weigand & Sons Realtors. At Hutchinson Hospital, I visited with several administrators, including Gene Schmidt, President & CEO; Gary Withrow, Vice President of Finance; Isabel Schmedemann, Vice President of Nursing; Dr. Stan Barker, Chief of Staff; and Dr. Mohammed Janif, a new Hutchinson Clinic cardiologist.

Hosting Hays Chamber of Commerce Coffee

On Friday, I hosted a Chamber Coffee in conjunction with Rooftops Restaurant in Hays. The event was to honor Dr. Richard Heil on his retirement as the Chair of the Political Science Department at Fort Hays State University. Dr. Heil spent more than 40 years at FHSU after arriving at the university as a one-year temporary instructor. Dr. Heil has impacted many students during his years at FHSU and continues to be a good friend of mine.

The coffee was also an opportunity for me to meet and visit with members of the Hays community. I always enjoy meeting with folks at home. I would like to thank Rooftops and the Hays Chamber for their great work on this event.

Spending Time in Larned and Riding in the Salina Tri-Rivers Fair Parade

I spent time in Larned on Tuesday visiting with area residents at various stops throughout town. I stopped at Carr Auction and Realty, Pawnee County Farm Bureau, Larned Veterinary Clinic, Larned Public Library and the office of the local paper, the Larned Tiller and Toiler. I also attended the board meeting of the Chamber of Commerce.

I then joined the residents of Saline County on Wednesday for the Tri-Rivers Fair Parade in Salina. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit with many Saline County residents and was impressed to see such a good turnout despite the 111 degree temperature.

Participating in the Glen Elder Fun Day Parade

I traveled to Glen Elder on Saturday to participate in the community's annual Fun Day. The weekend of festivities include such things as a fun run, street dance, softball tournament and parade. The Glen Elder Community Club sponsors these events and I enjoyed spending time in the community to participate in the parade.

In the Office

In with the National Cooperative Refinery Association this week was Jim Loving of McPherson. Jim and his family, Tommy, Leigh, Greg and Dawn, were in Washington, D.C., for vacation and stopped by to introduce themselves.

Several people were in my office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol, including Pamela Bacon of Canton, Judy Jennings of Lakin, William and Pearl Besecker of McPherson, and Daniel and Sarah Madgwick of Manhattan with their son, Phinneas. Also in were David and Janet Leopold of Hoxie with their grandson, Henry Leopold of Fairway; Nancy Bollig of WaKeeney with her daughter, Diane; and Mike and Connie Christopher of Salina with their children, Abby and Jeremy, and friend Adam Burchfield, also of Salina.

Very truly yours,

Jerry